

Presentation speech for Professor Trevor Smith for the degree of Doctor of Science, *honoris causa*

Aristotle tells us that ‘Man is by nature a political animal.’ Lord Trevor Smith, our Honorand today, has always been interested in politics - as an activity and a subject of study. He began both simultaneously as a student at the London School of Economics in 1955 where he joined the Liberal Party (when Clement Davies was its leader) and specialised in political science. He graduated from the LSE in 1958 and then taught in a secondary school while serving as Chair of the Union of Liberal Students and as a member of the Liberal Party’s national executive. He contested the 1959 General Election in West Lewisham, being the youngest candidate of any party that year.

He became an academic successively at Exeter, Hull, California State and Queen Mary, London, culminating as Vice Chancellor of the University of Ulster during the eventful 1990s. He also served as chair and president of the Political Studies Association. Outside university life, he was a board member of Rowntree Reform Trust Ltd and President of the Belfast Civic Trust. He developed a strong interest in health policy serving as a member of the North Yorkshire Health Authority, vice-chair of the Tower Hamlets Health Authority and vice-president of the Patients Association. He has also been on the boards of the New Statesman, New Society and Gerald Duckworth (publishers).

Knighted in 1996, he became a Liberal Democrat working peer in 1997 and for many years was the party’s spokesperson on Northern Ireland in the Lords. He served on a wide variety of important Lords Committees.

Lord Smith has always maintained a close interest in corporate affairs and – significantly – his first book was entitled *Training Managers*. From the perspective of the independent University of Buckingham, it is interesting that this work identifies the vital role of Independent Colleges in Management education. He notes that their courses:

... are less limited in their syllabuses to academic spheres of interest, and they make a serious effort to meet the needs of industry. The contacts with industry are rather closer than is the case with the university courses.

He notes, however, that teachers involved in the training of managers must be given time to pursue research and to keep up their expertise on management subjects. This is, of course, one of the central features of the Study Leave term which is so important to the mission of this university.

I think, Chancellor, that there are important links between on Honorand’s political life and his views on corporate affairs. Both seem to have their origins in the philosophy of New Liberalism that figures such as Graham Wallace, L T Hobhouse and William Beveridge developed in the early days of the LSE. This is a very noble tradition and one that was shared by some of our founders such as John MacCullum Scott. It combines a commitment to social progress, liberty, economic efficiency. In the microcosm this translates into the four principles identified in *Training Managers*:

- Increased knowledge
- Attitude Changes
- Improved skills
- Improved intellectual skills.

Whatever, academic discipline we follow, these are objectives we should seek to achieve with our students.